March Comes in Like a Lion

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY UMINO CHIKA
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SCANLATED BY BE WITH YOU SCANS (2012/10)
#BWYS@IRC.IRCHIGHWAY.NET
BWYS.ORG

RAW PURCHASED & SCANNED BY MARIS
TRANSLATED BY KEWL0210
CLEANED & TYPESET BY CHARA
QC BY CHARA & MARIS

Chapter 29

Just a Bit of Water

When I was awake I couldn't stop thinking about things,

so I slept.

And I just kept sleeping–

The whole time, I had been thinking only of clashing with Gotou.

Back then, I often couldn't sleep, so I would study kifu like crazy.

I'd go a few days without eating or drinking anything

and then sleep like a corpse.

SFX: GAN GANN GANN GAAAAN GAAA GAN GAN GAN (THROB THROB THROB THRRROB;THROB;THROB THRROB THROB)

WA...

OW!

WH... WHAT IS THIS?!

.....

Throb...

HM?

Throb...

Throb...

–But eventually, continuously sleeping

became impossible...

I was bewildered.

but–

any liquid I put into my mouth just came right back out.

It should have gone away if I drank enough liquids,

COUGH

COUGH

COUGH

I was dehydrated.

THIS IS BAD.

WHAT DO I DO?

IF I LOSE ANY MORE HYDRATION...

BWTS NOTE: POCARI SWEAT IS A POPULAR JAPANESE SPORTS DRINK

The next day, almost crawling, I finally got to the nearby convenience store.

It was over half a day before I could get up.

I have dim memories of slowly licking Pocari with a bit of salt a little at a time.

SANGAISU

I'm an idiot.

TAB: ON SALE TODAY

CENTRE MAGAZINE: FROM 8 THIS WEEK'S JOBS

本日発売

本日発売

転職マガジン

求人情報

from日

ガチン

I'm even bad at being depress-ed.

There are many different kinds of jobs in the world, like these.

WAITING TABLES...

MAR-KET-ING,

BUSI-NESS...

PRO-GRAM-MING...

SECU-RITY...

DRIVING, COOKING STAFF...

—But pretty much all of them...

—YEAH...

THAT'S RIGHT...

AND UNTIL THEN, IN ORDER TO EARN MONEY TO PAY MY RENT...

IT'S STILL TWO YEARS UNTIL I GRADUATE HIGH SCHOOL...

YEAH, IT LOOKS LIKE

ALL I CAN DO IS KEEP PLAYING SHOGI.

I've got a lot of matches. I could be in trouble with absences.

Somehow, I've at least got to go to school...

in order to be able to choose my own path.

—Is what I thought when I enrolled for school.

It started right off the bat with phys-ed.

LET'S GO!

JERSEY TEAM, OVER HERE!!

YEAH!

And on top of that, it was basketball!!

SFX: AWA AWA— (PANIC PANIC—) SFX: FURUFURU— (WOBBLE WOBBLE—) SFX: POTSURI— (SILENCE...)

SFX: DAMU DAMU DAMU ZUDAMU (DRIBBLE DRIBBLE DRIBBLE DRIBBLE)

Um, what do I do?

The goal is way over there.

So do I... pass it to someone? Or something?

SFX: OBU OBU (UM UM)

—Wait, huh? The ball's coming towards me?!

SFX: AWAWA (PANIC) SFX: GOOOOO (WHOOSH)

Wh... Where am I supposed to go?

Well, I guess I'll just run and try not to draw attention to myself...

Um, you over there... What's your name again? Glasses guy!! I need your help here!!

KYAA

This is how it looked to him...

SFX: BYU (WHIZZ)

what the hell are you doing?!

AGH.

You idiot!

Dammit.

SFX: MOSU (MYAAAA)

Hey, four eyes!

KYAA

SFX: GABO (SQUELCH)

I'LL TAKE THAAAT!!

SFX: BAA (SMACK)

Yeah, really.

THIS ISN'T IT RIGHT... KIND OF DOESN'T HAVE ANY TASTE...

IT'S LIKE I'M BITING INTO SAND.

WHAT AM I DOING...?

SERI-OUSLY.

WHAT DO I DO?

I KIND OF_

DON'T KNOW ANY-MORE...

Am I really "not running away" now?

I WANTED TO HAVE THE MEMORY

OF "NOT RUNNING AWAY"...

What if all I'm doing is "pretending not to run away"?

THIS IS KINDA DIFFER-ENT.

DIFFERENT FROM HOW I IMAGINED HIGH SCHOOL.

I THOUGHT IT WOULD BECOME SOMETHING I WOULD FIRMLY BE ABLE TO DO RIGHT.

I thought that if I left home,

paid my own rent and made my own living,

then that would make me an adult.

And if I became an adult,

I thought

I wouldn't need to cry

anymore—

SFX. BAAAA (RISE)

—Wait, uh, what is this?!

A job magazine?!

What's going on here?!

HUUUH?!

—Huh.

You're crying?!

What's wrong?!

SFX. HYOI (POP)

Kiirfyama ☆

CUP RAMEN

SFX. DOKA (WHACK)

IT'S OKAY, JUST EAT THIS!!

FIRST, JUST EAT

WHAT'S MORE, YOU'RE ONLY THE 5TH MIDDLE SCHOOL PRO IN HISTORY!!

THERE'S SOMETHING WEIRD ABOUT THIS SETUP!

A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT SITTING ALONE ON A STAIRCASE READING A JOB MAGAZINE?!

YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE THE STAR OF HOPE FOR THE SHOGI WORLD!

AHHH GEEZ!

Geez, I don't know what to ask about first!!

HEY, KIRI-YAMA.

MAYBE YOU SHOULD THINK ABOUT GOING BACK TO YOUR MASTER, KOUDA-SAN'S HOUSE AGAIN?

SO YOU'RE ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO EATS COLD THINGS WHEN YOU'RE DEPRESSED?

ISN'T THAT BAD FOR YOU?! GET SOMETHING WARM!!

Won't it cut your HP in half?

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE SHISHI OU CHAMPI-ONSHIP WAS TOO BAD. I SAW IT ONLINE.

THAT SHIMADA 8TH DAN REALLY IS GOOD.

BUT...

YOU'RE GOING TO GO OVER YOUR CAPACITY.

IT'S TOO MUCH FOR A 17-YEAR-OLD.

AND YOU'RE ALSO MAKING YOUR OWN FOOD, DOING YOUR OWN LAUNDRY, AND THE OTHER THINGS AROUND YOU...

YOU'VE GOT RANK-DECIDING MATCHES AND TOURNAMENTS GOING ON ALL YEAR LONG, YOU'RE GOING TO SCHOOL WHERE YOU'VE GOT TESTS AND STUFF,

...

BUT

I WAS IN THE SAME CLASS AS SOUYA MEIJIN, BUT HE NEVER STOOD OUT TO ME.

BUT HE WAS TRULY PERSISTENT AND MADE IT UP TO A-CLASS. HE'S THE PICTURE OF "HARD WORK", THAT MAN.

IT'S AMAZING HOW RECENTLY HE'S FREQUENTLY BEEN A CONTENDER IN TITLE MATCHES...

You sure know a lot about him.

Oh, yeah...!

So it interests me.

We're the same age.

ALSO, SHIMADA 8TH DAN IS BOTH PERVASIVE AND PASSIONATE. HE OPENS STUDY GROUPS AND STUDIES WITH YOUNGER PLAYERS...

THAT REMINDS ME—

HAVE YOU EVER DONE THAT? JOIN A STUDY GROUP?

NO.

WITH THOSE SORTS OF THINGS, I...

THEN WHY DON'T YOU TRY JOINING ONE?

BUT I—

WHICH REMINDS ME, I'D HEARD THAT NIKAIDOU 4TH DAN IS IN IT.

ONE LIKE SHIMADA 8TH DAN'S STUDY GROUP.

BUT...

WHY? IT'D BE SUCH A WASTE NOT TO.

THEY SAY YOU CAN LEARN A LOT FROM AN OPPONENT THAT DEFEATED YOU, RIGHT?

.....

BUT...

ALL THAT'S BEEN COMING OUT OF YOUR MOUTH IS "BUT, BUT BUT"!!

GAAAAAH GEEZ!

SFX: UGAAA

SFX: BIKUU (SURPRISE)

IT'D BE GREAT IF ASSEMBLING A HUNDRED "BUTS" WOULD MAKE A DOOR OPEN, BUT TO BE PERFECTLY HONEST,

THERE ARE NO DOORS LIKE THAT!!

BUT,

NO BUTS—

HEY, ANIJA.

WHY CAN'T YOU CALL KIRIYAMA-SAN DIRECTLY?

YOU SAID YOU WERE GONNA INVITE HIM TO OUR STUDY GROUP THIS AFTERNOON, DIDN'T YOU?

将棋会館

YEAAH.

IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN,

BUT IT REALLY COMES DOWN TO THIS.

ALL I CAN DO IS WAIT FOR HIM TO ASK HIMSELF.

SO IT'S ONE OF THOSE THINGS?

YEAH.

ONE OF THOSE THINGS.

Chapter 29 end